

Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 270 innocent people, including 189 Americans, some of whom were from my own State of Pennsylvania. This was not a tragic accident, but a deliberate act of cold-hearted murder. Two suspected Libyan intelligence agents were charged in 1991 by the United States and United Kingdom as having perpetrated this cowardly deed. Yet for more than 5 years they have remained safely protected by the Libyan Government. Despite the imposition of both U.S. and U.N. sanctions, this impasse has no end in sight.

That is one reason why the victims of the Pan Am 103 bombing are seeking accountability and compensation from the Government of Libya through civil actions here in United States courts. Unbelievably, before we passed legislation in April 1996, the immediate families of the victims were unable to sue in the United States because of Libya's sovereign immunity. Fortunately, we saw fit to change that cruel anomaly. However, Congress did not go far enough to recognize that there are other victims of terrorism besides those who tragically suffered personal injuries or death. In the case of Pan Am 103, thousands of innocent Americans lost their entire livelihood, pensions, benefits, and futures due to the subsequent bankruptcy of Pan American World Airways, an event directly related to the bombing. Yet these victims are not permitted their day in court by laws that only serve to protect the terrorist states.

There is no conceivable reason why a state that descends to the level of committing inhumane acts, such as the bombing of a civilian aircraft, should not be held totally and fully accountable for these intentional atrocities. No one can place a price on the loss of a loved one. But a family's loss of a loved one does not extinguish or diminish the loss another family might have suffered or suffers because of a loss of their livelihood.

That is why I am planning to introduce a bill that will allow any American financially harmed by an act of terrorism sponsored by one of the rogue states on the State Department's terrorism watch list to have their day in court and the opportunity to prove their losses. An American harmed by an intentional act as egregious as terrorism should be provided the opportunity to seek justice and compensation. This bill will send a message to those states who believe they can simply walk away from harming Americans. There is no legitimate reason that excuses our failure to act on this amendment and provide whatever possible legal protection we can. It is not only our political obligation as representatives of the U.S. Government, but it is our moral obligation to the American people we represent.

This proposed measure already has significant bipartisan support. Earlier today we sent to all Members of this House our request to join in this fight against terrorists. I hope that many more of my colleagues will see fit to join in our fight. No American victim of terrorism should ever be left alone to suffer as they do now. We can not, should not and will not stand for that.

H.R. 2015—THE BALANCED BUDGET ACT OF 1997

SPEECH OF

HON. WILLIAM J. COYNE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 30, 1997

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2015, the Balanced Budget Act of 1997.

I am pleased that many of the worst provisions in the House version of this bill have been eliminated or moderated. The changes make it possible for me to support the conference report on this bill. As a result of the unceasing efforts of President Clinton and the Democrats in Congress to make this a better bill, this legislation contains a number of provisions that will benefit millions of Americans.

This legislation will ensure the solvency of the Medicare part A trust fund for the next 10 years, and it creates a commission that will recommend measures to preserve this important program for decades more. H.R. 2015 preserves the Medicare Program primarily by lowering future reimbursement rates for health care providers. The bill also provides several important new prevention benefits to Medicare recipients—including expanded mammography coverage, coverage of prostate and colorectal cancer screenings, and screenings for osteoporosis, and self-management programs for diabetes.

The bill also includes \$24 billion for President Clinton's initiative to provide health insurance coverage for children who currently have no health insurance. This is a major step forward. I believe that this country needs comprehensive health care reform, but in the absence of such reform this measure represents a solid incremental improvement. Some estimates have suggested that up to half of the 10 million children who currently lack health insurance could receive coverage through this initiative.

This bill also takes several important steps to reverse many of the draconian provisions that were included in the so-called welfare reform bill that was enacted in the 104th Congress. Due to the leadership of President Clinton, and at the insistence of the House and Senate Democrats, H.R. 2015 restores SSI and Medicaid benefits for legal immigrants who were receiving them before the welfare reform bill was enacted last year, and it provides SSI benefits for legal immigrants who were in the country at that time and who subsequently became disabled. In addition, the bill eliminated the provision in the House version of this bill that would have excluded welfare recipients in workfare programs from Federal minimum wage and workplace protection laws.

Finally, I would like to point out that the balanced budget package that we will adopt this week has only been made possible by the deficit reduction packages of 1990 and 1993—bills that together reduced deficits by over a trillion dollars. Those were the real budget balancing votes. Those bills raised taxes and cut spending. It was not easy, but it was absolutely necessary to produce a healthy economy and economic growth. The upbeat economic conditions that we are enjoying today are due in no small part to those bills, and the tax breaks provided in this balanced budget

package are the fruits of the seeds that were sown in 1990 and 1993 by Democratic Congresses.

Mr. Speaker, in a letter that the American Association of Retired Persons sent to me earlier today, Mr. Horace B. Deets concluded that "legislation of this scope can never fully satisfy every interested party. But, on balance * * * this conference report * * * will accomplish the objectives of balancing the budget while also protecting access, affordability, quality, and choice in the Medicare Program." I agree with his assessment. Consequently, I intend to vote in support of this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to do so as well.

SUPPORT AWARENESS OF SUICIDE AND EFFORTS TO PREVENT SUICIDE

HON. JOHN LEWIS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 1997

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I am introducing a resolution today that recognizes that suicide is a national problem and encourages suicide prevention efforts. I am pleased that more than 20 of my colleagues are joining me in this effort by becoming original cosponsors of this bill.

It is my hope that congressional recognition will encourage people to talk about feelings of despair and suicide. An estimated 750,000 people attempt suicide each year. These attempts are traumatic not only for the individual but also for family and friends who surround him or her.

Suicide claims more than 31,000 lives annually, more than homicide. It is the ninth leading cause of all deaths in the United States and the third for young people aged 15 to 24. It is on the rise for young people in general and for African-American young men in particular.

We must talk about mental illness, and we must encourage treatment. We must tell our friends and our loved ones that it is OK to talk about feelings of despair, hopelessness, and suicide. For those who have the courage to get help, to seek treatment—we must support them. And we must talk about suicide so that we can try to understand it and prevent it.

Too much shame surrounds feelings of depression and suicide. We can change that—and we must—by reaching out to others in our community. This resolution recognizes suicide as a national problem and declares suicide prevention to be a national priority. It also encourages initiatives to prevent suicide and support people who have lost someone to suicide.

The Senate has already passed a similar resolution. It is my hope that the House of Representatives will soon consider this important issue.

HONORING TAIWAN'S
AMBASSADOR

HON. MAURICE D. HINCHEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 31, 1997

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, we have seen significant changes in the Far East in the last